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ON FAITH IN ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS.

The English word "Faith" came into the language under the influence of the French, and is but a modification of the Latin "Fides", which is itself cognate with the Greek *πίστις*. Its root-meaning seems to be that of "binding". Whatever we discover to be "binding" on us, is the object of "faith".¹ The corresponding Germanic term, represented by the English word "Believe" (and the German, "Glauben") goes back to a root meaning "to be agreeable" (represented by our English "lief"), and seems to present the object of belief as something which we "esteem"—which we have "estimated" or "weighed" and "approved". The notion of "constraint" is perhaps less prominent in "belief" than in "faith", its place being taken in "belief" by that of "approval". We "believe" in what we find worthy of our confidence; we "have faith" in what compels our confidence. But it would be easy to press this too far, and it is likely that the two terms "faith", "belief" really express much the same idea.² In the natural use of language, therefore, which is normally controlled by what we call etymology, that is, by the intrinsic connotation of the terms, when we say "faith", "belief", our minds are pre-

¹ The Hebrew *אמונה, האמין* go back to the idea of "holding": we believe in what "holds". In both the sacred languages, therefore, the fundamental meaning of faith is "surety". Cf. Latin "*credo*".

² Cf. M. Heyne's German Dictionary *sub voc.* "Glaube": "*Glaube* is confiding acceptance of a truth. At the basis of the word is the root *lub*, which, with the general meaning of agreeing with and of approving, appears also in *erlauben* and *loben*."

occupied with the grounds of the conviction expressed: we are speaking of a mental act or state to which we feel constrained by considerations objective to ourselves, or at least to the act or state in question. The conception embodied in the terms "Belief", "Faith", in other words, is not that of an arbitrary act of the subject's; it is that of a mental state or act which is determined by sufficient reasons.

In their fundamental connotation, thus, these terms are very broad. There seems nothing in the terms themselves, indeed, to forbid their employment in so wide a sense as to cover the whole field of "sureness", "conviction". Whatever we accept as true or real, we may very properly be said to "believe", to "have faith in"; all that we are convinced of may be said to be matter of "belief", "faith". So the terms are, accordingly, very often employed. Thus, for example, Professor J. M. Baldwin defines "belief" simply as "mental endorsement or acceptance of something thought of as real"; and remarks of "conviction", that it "is a loose term whose connotation, so far as exact, is near to that here given to belief".³ He even adds—we think with less exactness—that "judgment" is merely "the logical or formal side of the same state of mind" which, on the psychological side, is called belief. To us, judgment appears a broader term than "belief", expressing a mental act which underlies "belief" indeed, but cannot be identified with it.⁴

Meanwhile we note with satisfaction that Professor Baldwin recognizes the element of constraint ("bindingness") in "belief", and distinguishes it clearly from acts of the will, thereby setting aside the definition of it—quite commonly given—which finds the differentia of beliefs, among convictions, in this—that they are "voluntary convictions". "There is", he says,⁵ "a distinct difference in consciousness

³ And Professor Stout: *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, I, p. 110. Cf. p. 112 &c.

⁴ Prof. Baldwin does not allow any psychological distinction between "belief" and "knowledge." See *sub voc.* "Knowledge".

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 112. The passage is quoted from Baldwin, *Handbook of Psychology; Feeling and Will.* 1891, p. 171.

between the consent of belief and the consent of will. The consent of belief is, in a measure, a forced consent; it attaches to what is—to what stands in the order of things whether I consent or no. The consent of will is a forceful consent—a consent to what shall be through me.” That is to say, with respect to belief, it is a mental recognition of what is before the mind, as objectively true and real, and therefore depends on the evidence that a thing is true and real and is determined by this evidence; it is the response of the mind to this evidence and cannot arise apart from it. It is, therefore, impossible that belief should be the product of a volition; volitions look to the future and represent our desires; beliefs look to the present and represent our findings.

Professor Baldwin does not recognize this, however, in its entirety, as is already apparent from the qualification inserted into his description of “belief”. “It is”, says he, “*in a measure*, a forced consent.” He wishes, after all, to leave room for “voluntary beliefs”. Accordingly, he proceeds: “In cases in which belief is brought about by desire or will, there is a subtle consciousness of inadequate evidence, until by repetition the item desired or willed no longer needs volition to give it a place in the series deemed objective; then it is for the first time belief, but then it is no longer will.” “Beliefs”, then, according to Professor Baldwin, although not to be confounded with acts of the will, may yet be produced by the action of the will, even while the “evidence” on which they should more properly rest, is recognized by the mind willing them to be insufficient.

We cannot help suspecting this suggestion to rest on a defective analysis of what actually goes on in the mind in the instances commented on. These appear to us to be cases in which we determine to act on suppositions recognized as lacking sufficient evidence to establish them in our minds as accordant with reality and therefore not accepted as accordant with reality, that is to say, as “beliefs”. If they pass, as Dr. Baldwin suggests, gradually into “beliefs”, when re-

peatedly so acted upon—is that not because the mind derives from such repeated action, resulting successfully, additional evidence that the suppositions in question do represent reality and may be safely acted on as such? Would not the thing acted on in such cases be more precisely stated as the belief that these suppositions may be accordant with reality, not that they are? The consciousness that the evidence is inadequate which accompanies such action (though Dr. Baldwin calls it “subtle”)—is it not in fact just the witness of consciousness that it does not assert these suppositions to be accordant with reality, and does not recognize them as “beliefs”, though it is willing to act on them on the hypothesis that they may prove to be accordant with reality and thus make good their aspirations to become beliefs? And can any number of repetitions (repetitions of what, by the way?) make this testimony of consciousness void? Apparently what we repeat is simply volitions founded on the possibility or probability of the suppositions in question being in accordance with reality; and it is difficult to see how the repetition of such volitions can elevate the suppositions in question into the rank of beliefs except by eliminating doubt as to their accordance with reality by creating evidence for them through their “working well”. The repetition of a volition to treat a given proposition as true—especially if it is accompanied by a consciousness (however subtle) that there is no sufficient evidence that it is true—can certainly not result in making it true; and can scarcely of itself result in producing an insufficiently grounded conviction in the mind (always at least subtly conscious that it rests on insufficient evidence) that it is true, and so in “giving it a place in the series deemed objective”. A habit of treating a given proposition as correspondent to reality may indeed be formed; and as this habit is formed, the accompanying consciousness that it is in point of fact grounded in insufficient evidence, may no doubt drop into the background, or even wholly out of sight; thus we may come to act—instinctively, shall we say? or inadvertently?—on the supposi-

tion of the truth of the proposition in question. But this does not seem to carry with it as inevitable implication that "beliefs" may be created by the action of the will. It may only show that more or less probable, or more or less improbable, suppositions, more or less clearly envisaged as such, may enter into the complex of conditions which influence action, and that the human mind in the processes of its ordinary activity does not always keep before it in perfect clearness the lines of demarcation which separate the two classes of its beliefs and its conjectures, but may sometimes rub off the labels which serve to mark its convictions off from its suppositions and to keep each in their proper place.

It would seem to be fairly clear that "belief" is always the product of evidence and that it cannot be created by volitions, whether singly or in any number of repetitions. The interaction of belief and volition is, questionless, most intimate and most varied, but one cannot be successfully transmuted into the other, nor one be mistaken for the other. The consent of belief is in its very nature and must always be what Dr. Baldwin calls "forced consent", that is to say, determined by evidence, not by volition; and when the consent of will is secured by a supposition, recognized by consciousness as inadequately based in evidence, this consent of will has no tendency to act as evidence and raise the supposition into a belief—its tendency is only to give to a supposition the place of a belief in the ordering of life.

We may infer from this state of the case that "preparedness to act" is scarcely a satisfactory definition of the state of mind which is properly called "faith", "belief". This was the definition suggested by Dr. Alexander Bain. "Faith", "belief", certainly expresses a state of preparedness to act; and it may be very fairly contended that "preparedness to act" supplies a very good test of the genuineness of "faith", "belief". A so-called "faith", "belief" on which we are not prepared to act is near to no real "faith", "belief" at all. What we are convinced of, we should certainly confide in; and what we are unwilling to confide in we seem not quite

sure of—we do not appear thoroughly to believe, to have faith in. But though all “faith”, “belief” is preparedness to act, it does not follow that all preparedness to act is “faith”, “belief”. We may be prepared to act, on some other ground than “faith”, “belief”. On “knowledge” say—if knowledge may be distinguished from belief—or, as we have already suggested, on “supposition”—on a probability or even a possibility. To be sure, as we have already noted, the real ground of our action in such cases may be stated in terms of “faith”, “belief”. Our preparedness to act may be said to be our belief—our conviction—that, if the supposition in question is not yet shown to be in conformity to reality, it yet may be so. Meanwhile, it is clear that the supposition in question is not a thing believed to be in accordance with fact, and is therefore not a belief but a “supposition”; not a “conviction” but a conjecture. “Belief”, “faith” is the consent of the mind to the reality of the thing in question; and when the mind withholds its consent to the reality, “belief”, “faith” is not present. These terms are not properly employed except when a state of conviction is present; they designate the response of the mind to evidence in a consent to the adequacy of the evidence.

It, of course, does not follow that all our “beliefs”, “faiths” correspond with reality. Our convictions are not infallible. When we say that “belief”, “faith” is the product of evidence and is in that sense a compelled consent, this is not the same as saying that consent is produced only by compelling evidence, that is, evidence which is objectively adequate. Objective adequacy and subjective effect are not exactly correlated. The amount, degree and quality of evidence which will secure consent varies from mind to mind and in the same mind from state to state. Some minds, or all minds in some states, will respond to very weak evidence with full consent; some minds or all minds in some states, will resist very strong evidence. There is no “faith”, “belief” possible without evidence or what the mind takes for evidence; “faith”, “belief” is a state of mind

grounded in evidence and impossible without it. But the fullest "faith", "belief" may ground itself in very weak evidence—if the mind mistakes it for strong evidence. "Faith", "belief" does not follow the evidence itself, in other words, but the judgment of the intellect on the evidence. And the judgment of the intellect naturally will vary endlessly, as intellect differs from intellect or as the states of the same intellect differ from one another.

From this circumstance has been taken an attempt to define "faith", "belief" more closely than merely mental endorsement of something as true—as, broadly, the synonym of "conviction"—and to distinguish it as a specific form of conviction from other forms of conviction. "Faith", "belief", it is said (e. g. by Kant), is conviction founded on evidence which is subjectively adequate. "Knowledge" is conviction founded on evidence which is objectively adequate. That "faith" and "knowledge" do differ from one another, we all doubtless feel; but it is not easy to believe that their specific difference is found in this formula. It is of course plain enough that every act of "faith", "belief" rests on evidence which is subjectively adequate. But it is far from plain that this evidence must be objectively inadequate on pain of the mental response ceasing to be "faith", "belief" and becoming "knowledge". Are all "beliefs", "faiths", specifically such, in their very nature inadequately established convictions; convictions, indeed—matters of which we feel sure—but of which we feel sure on inadequate grounds—grounds either consciously recognized by us as inadequate, or, if supposed by us to be adequate, yet really inadequate?

No doubt there is a usage of the terms current—especially when they are set in contrast with one another—which does conceive them after this fashion; a legitimate enough usage, because it is founded on a real distinction in the connotation of the two terms. We do sometimes say, "I do not *know* this or that to be true, but I fully *believe* it"—meaning that though we are altogether persuaded of it we are

conscious that the grounds for believing it fall short of complete objective coerciveness. But this special usage of the terms ought not to deceive us as to their essential meaning. And it surely requires little consideration to assure us that it cannot be of the essence of "faith", "belief" that the grounds on which it rests are—consciously or unconsciously—objectively inadequate. Faith must not be distinguished from knowledge only that it may be confounded with conjecture. And how, in any case, shall the proposed criterion of faith be applied? To believe on grounds of the inadequacy of which we are conscious, is on the face of it an impossibility. The moment we perceive the objective inadequacy of the grounds on which we pronounce the reality of anything, they become subjectively inadequate also. And so long as they appear to us subjectively adequate, the resulting conviction will be indistinguishable from "knowledge". To say that "knowledge" is a justified recognition of reality and "faith", "belief" is an unjustified recognition of reality, is to erect a distinction which can have no possible psychological basis. The recognizing mind makes and can make no such distinction between the soundness and unsoundness of its own recognitions of reality. An outside observer might certainly distribute into two such categories the "convictions" of a mind brought under his contemplation; but the distribution would represent the outside observer's judgment upon the grounds of these convictions, not that of the subject himself. The moment the mind observed itself introduced such a distribution among its "convictions" it would remove the whole class of "convictions" to which it assigned an inadequate grounding out of the category of "convictions" altogether. To become conscious that some of its convictions were unjustified would be to abolish them at once as convictions, and to remove them into the category at best of conjectures, at worst of erroneous judgments. We accord with Dr. Baldwin therefore when he declares of this distinction that it is "not psychological".⁶

⁶ *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, I. p. 603.

The mind knows and can know nothing of objectively and subjectively adequate grounds in forming its convictions. All it is conscious of is the adequacy or inadequacy of the grounds on which its convictions are based. If they appeal to it as adequate, the mind is convinced; if they do not, it remains unconvinced. Faith, belief, is to consciousness just an act or state of conviction, of being sure; and therefore cannot be explained as something less than a conviction, something less than being sure, or as a conviction indeed, but a conviction which differs from other convictions by being, if not ungrounded, yet not adequately grounded. That were all one with saying it is a conviction no doubt, but nevertheless not quite a conviction—a manifest contradiction in terms.

The failure of this special attempt to distinguish between faith and knowledge need not argue, however, that there is no distinction between the two. Faith may not be inadequately grounded conviction any more than it is voluntary conviction—the two come to much the same thing—and yet be a specific mode of conviction over against knowledge as a distinct mode of conviction. The persistence with which it is set over against knowledge in our popular usage of the words as well as in the definitions of philosophers may be taken as an indication that there is some cognizable distinction between the two, could we but fasten upon it. And the persistence with which this distinction is sought in the nature of the grounds on which faith in distinction from knowledge rests is equally notable. Thus we find Dr. Alexander T. Ormond⁷ defining “faith” as “the personal acceptance of something as true or real, but—the distinguishing mark—on grounds that, in whole or in part, are different from those of theoretic certitude”. Here faith is distinguished from other forms of conviction—“knowledge” being apparently in mind as the other term of the contrast. And the distinguishing mark of “faith” is found in the nature of the grounds on which it rests. The nature of these

⁷ Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, I, p. 309.

grounds, however, is expressed only negatively. We are not told what they are but only that they are (in whole or in part) different to "those of theoretic certitude". The effect of the definition as it stands is therefore only to declare that the term faith does not express all forms of conviction, but one form only; and that this form of conviction differs from the form which is given the name of "theoretic certitude",—that is to say, doubtless, "knowledge"—in the grounds on which it rests. But what the positive distinguishing mark of the grounds on which the mode of conviction which we call faith rests is, we are not told. Dr. Ormond does, indeed, go on to say that "the moment of will enters into the assent of faith", and that "in the form of some subjective interest or consideration of value". From this it might be inferred that the positive differentia of faith, unexpressed in the definition, would be that it is voluntary conviction, conviction determined not by the evidence of reality present to our minds, but by our desire or will that it should be true—this desire or will expressing "some subjective interest or consideration of value".⁸

Put baldly, this might be interpreted as meaning that we "know" what is established to us as true, we "believe" what we think we should be advantaged by if true; we "know" what we perceive to be real, we "believe" what we should like to be real. To put it so baldly, may no doubt press Dr. Ormond's remark beyond his intention. He recognizes that "some faith-judgments are translatable into judgments of knowledge." But he does not believe that all are; and he suggests that "the final test of the validity" of these latter must lie in "the sphere of the practical rather than in that of theoretical truth". The meaning is not throughout perfectly clear. But the upshot seems to be that in Dr. Or-

⁸In his fuller discussion in his *Foundations of Knowledge*, 1900, Part III, ch. I, Dr. Ormond tells us that what positively characterizes belief as over against knowledge is, subjectively, that "the volitional motive begins to dominate the epistemological" (p. 306), and, objectively, that the quality of "coerciveness" is lacking. The two criteria come very much to the same thing.

mond's opinion, that class of convictions which we designate "faith" differs from that class of convictions which we designate "knowledge" by the fact that they rest (in whole or in part) not on "theoretical" but on "practical" grounds—that is to say, not on evidence but on considerations of value. And that appears ultimately to mean that we know a thing which is proved to us to be true or real; but we believe a thing which we would fain should prove to be true or real. Some of the things which we thus believe may be reduced to "knowledge" because there may be proofs of their reality available which were not, or not fully, present to our minds "when we believed". Others of them may be incapable of such reduction either because no such proofs of their truth or reality exist, or because those proofs are not accessible to us. But our acceptance of them all alike as true rests, not on evidence that they are true, but (in whole or in part) on "some subjective interest" or "consideration of value". Failing "knowledge" we may take these things "on faith"—because we perceive that it would be well if they were true, and we cannot believe that that at least is not true of which it is clear to us that it would be in the highest degree well if it were true.

It is not necessary to deny that many things are accepted by men as true and accordant with reality on grounds of subjective interest or considerations of value; or that men may be properly moved to the acceptance of many things as true and real by such considerations. Considerations of value may be powerful arguments—they may even constitute proofs—of truth and reality. But it appears obvious enough that all of those convictions which we know as "beliefs", "faiths" do not rest on "subjective interests or considerations of value"—either wholly or even in part. Indeed, it would be truer to say that none of them rest on subjective interests or considerations of value as such, but whenever such considerations enter into their grounds they enter in as evidences of reality or as factors of mental movement lending vividness and vitality to elements of proper evidence

before the mind. Men do not mean by their "faiths", "beliefs", things they would fain were true; they mean things they are convinced are true. Their minds are not resting on considerations of value, but on what they take to be evidences of reality. The employment of these terms to designate "acceptances as true and real" on the ground of subjective interest or of considerations of value represents, therefore, no general usage but is purely an affair of the schools, or rather of a school. And it does violence not only to the general convictions of men but also to the underlying idea of the terms. No terms, in fact, lend themselves more reluctantly to the expression of a "voluntary acceptance", in any form, than these. As we have already seen, they carry with them the underlying idea of bindingness, worthiness of acceptance; they express, in Dr. Baldwin's phrase, a "forced consent"; and whenever we employ them there is present to the mind a consciousness of grounds on which they firmly rest as expressive of reality. Whatever may be the differentia of "belief", "faith" as a specific form of conviction, we may be sure, therefore, that desire or will cannot be the determining element of the grounds on which this conviction rests. What we gain from Dr. Ormond's definition then is only the assurance that by "faith" is denoted not all forms of conviction, but a specific form—that this specific form is differentiated from other forms by the nature of the grounds on which the conviction called "faith" rests—and that the grounds on which this form of conviction rests are not those of theoretic certitude. The form of conviction which rests on grounds adapted to give "theoretic certitude" we call "knowledge". What the special character of the grounds on which the form of conviction we call "faith" rests remains yet to seek.

This gain, although we may speak of it as, for the main matter, only negative, is not therefore unimportant. To have learned that in addition to the general usage of "faith", "belief" in which it expresses all "mental endorsement or acceptance of anything as real", and is equipollent with the

parallel term "conviction", there is a more confined usage of it expressing a specific form of "conviction" in contrast with the form of conviction called "knowledge" is itself an important gain. And to learn further that the specific character of the form of conviction which we call "knowledge" is that it rests on grounds which give "theoretic certitude", is an important aid, by way of elimination, in fixing on the specific characteristic of the form of conviction which in contrast to "knowledge" we call "faith". "Faith" we know now is a form of conviction which arises differently to "theoretic certitude"; and if certain bases for its affirmation of reality which have been suggested have been excluded in the discussion—such as that it rests on a volition or a series of volitions, on considerations of value rather than of reality, on evidence only subjectively but not objectively adequate—the way seems pretty well cleared for a positive determination of precisely what it is that it does rest on. We have at least learned that while distinguishing it from "knowledge", which is conviction of the order of "theoretic certitude", we must find some basis for "faith", "belief" which will preserve its full character as "conviction" and not sublimate it into a wish or a will, a conjectural hypothesis or a mistake.

It was long ago suggested that what we call "faith", "belief", as contradistinguished from "knowledge" is conviction grounded in authority, as distinguished from conviction grounded in reason. "We *know*", says Augustine, "what rests upon *reason*; we *believe* what rests upon *authority*"; and Sir William Hamilton pronounces this "accurately" said.⁹ It is not intended of course to represent "faith", "belief" as irrational, any more than it is intended to represent "knowledge" as free from all dependence on taking-on-trust. It was fully recognized by Augustine—as by Sir William Hamilton—that an activity of reason underlies all "faith", and an act of "faith" underlies all knowledge. "But reason itself", says Sir William Hamilton, ex-

⁹ *Reid's Works*: note A, section 5.

pounding Augustine's dictum,¹⁰ "must rest at last upon authority; for the original data of reason do not rest upon reason, but are necessarily accepted by reason on the authority of what is beyond itself. These data are, therefore, in rigid propriety, *beliefs*, or *trusts*. Thus it is that in the last resort, we must, perforce, philosophically admit, that *belief* is the primary condition of reason, and not reason the ultimate ground of *belief*." With equal frankness Augustine allows that reason underlies all acts of faith. That mental act which we call faith, he remarks, is one possible only to rational creatures, and of course we act as rational beings in performing it;¹¹ and we never believe anything until we have found it worthy of our belief.¹² As we cannot accord faith, then, without perceiving good grounds for according it, reason as truly underlies faith as faith reason. It is with no intention, then, of denying or even obscuring this interaction of faith and knowledge—what may be justly called their interdependence—that they are distinguished from one another in their secondary applications as designating two distinguishable modes of conviction, the one resting on reason the other on authority. What is intended is to discriminate the proximate grounds on which the mental consent designated by the one and the other rests. When the proximate ground of our conviction is reason, we call it "knowledge"; when it is authority we call it "faith", "belief". Or to put it in other but equivalent terms, we know what we are convinced of on the ground of perception: we believe what we are convinced of on the ground of testimony. "With respect to things we have seen or see", says Augustine,¹³ "we are our own witnesses; but with respect to those we believe, we are moved to faith by other witnesses." We cannot believe, any more than we can know, without adequate grounds; it is

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Epist.* 120: "we should not be able to believe if we did not have rational minds."

¹² *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, ii. 5.

¹³ *Epist.* 147.3.8.

not faith but "credulity" to accord credit to insufficient evidence; and an unreasonable faith is no faith at all. But we are moved to this act of conviction by the evidence of testimony, by the force of authority—rationally determined to be trustworthy—and not by the immediate perception of our own rational understandings.¹⁴ In a word, while both knowing and believing are states of conviction, sureness—and the surety may be equally strong—they rest proximately on different grounds. Knowledge is seeing, faith is crediting.¹⁵

It powerfully commends this conception of the distinction between faith and knowledge, that it employs these terms to designate a distinction which is undoubtedly real. Whatever we choose to call these two classes of convictions, these two classes of convictions unquestionably exist. As Augustine puts it, "no one doubts that we are impelled to the acquisition of knowledge by a double impulse—of authority

¹⁴ On Augustine's doctrine of Faith and Reason see "THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW", July, 1907, 389, sq.

¹⁵ This conception of "faith" naturally became traditional. Thus, e. g., Reginald Pecock (middle of 15th century) defines faith as "a knowyng wherbi we assenten to eny thing as to trouthe, for as mych as we have sure evydencis gretter than to the contrarie that it is toold and affermid to us to be trewe, bi him of whom we have sure evydencis, or notable likli evydencis, gretter than to the contrarie, that therinne he not lied" (*The Folewer to the Donet*, f. 28). Here we have "faith" resting on evidence; and the specific evidence on which it rests, testimony. Accordingly he defines Christian faith thus: "that feith, of which we speken now, into which we ben bounde, and which is oon of the foundementis of Cristen religioun, is thilke kinde or spice of knowyng, which a man gendrith and getith into his undirstonding, principali bi the telling or denouncing of another persooone, which may not lie, or which is God" (*The Booke of Faith* I. i. f. 9a, Morrison's edition, 1909, p. 123). At the end of the discussion (f. 10a) Pecock plainly adds: "and bi this maner of his geting and gendring, feith is dyvers from other kindis and spices of kunnyngis, which a man gendrith and getith into his understanding bi bisynes and labour of his natural resoun, bi biholding upon the causis or effectis or circumstancis in nature of the conclusioun or treuthe, and withoute eny attendancc maad to eny sure teller or denouncer, that thilk conclusioun is a treuthe."

and of reason."¹⁶ We do possess convictions which are grounded in our own rational apprehension; and we do possess convictions which are grounded in our recognition of authority. We are erecting no artificial categories, then, when we distinguish between these two classes of convictions and label them respectively "knowledges" and "beliefs", "faiths". At the worst we are only applying to real distinctions artificial labels. It may possibly be said that there is no reason in the fitness of things why we should call those convictions which are of the order of "theoretical certitude", knowledge; and those which represent the certitude born of approved testimony, faith. But it cannot be said that no two such categories exist. It is patent to all of us, that some of our convictions rest on our own rational perception of reality, and that others of them rest on the authority exercised over us by tested testimony. The only question which can arise is whether "knowledge", "faith" are appropriate designations by which to call these two classes of convictions.

No one, of course, would think of denying that the two terms "knowledge", and "faith", "belief" are frequently employed as wholly equivalent—each designating simply a conviction, without respect to the nature of its grounds. Augustine already recognized this broad use of both terms to cover the whole ground of convictions. But neither can it be denied that they are often brought into contrast with one another as expressive each of a particular class of convictions, distinguishable from one another. The distinction indicated, no doubt, is often a distinction not in the nature of the evidence on which the several classes of conviction rest but in—shall we say the firmness, the clearness, the force of the conviction? The difficulty of finding the exact word to employ here may perhaps be instructive. When we say, for example, "I do not *know* it,—but I fully *believe* it" is it entirely clear that we are using "knowledge"

¹⁶ *Contr. Acad.* iii 20. 43; cf. *De Ordine*, ii 9. 26.

¹⁷ *Retract.* i, 104. 3.

merely of a higher degree of conviction than "faith" expresses? No doubt such a higher degree of conviction is intimated when, for example, to express the force of our conviction of a matter which nevertheless we are assured of only by testimony, we say emphatically, "I do not merely *believe* it; I *know* it." But may it not be that it would be more precise to say that "knowledge" even here expresses primarily rather a more direct and immediate grounding of conviction, and faith, belief, a more remote and mediate grounding of it—and that it is out of this primary meaning of the two terms that a secondary usage of them has arisen to express what on the surface appears as differing grades of convictions, but in the ultimate analysis is really differing relations of immediacy of the evidence on which the conviction rests? It adds not a little to the commendation of the distinction between "knowledge and faith under discussion, at all events, that it provides a starting point on the assumption of which other current usages of the terms may find ready and significant explanations.

When we come to inquire after the special appropriateness of the employment of the terms "faith", "belief" to designate those convictions which rest on authority or testimony, in distinction from those which rest on our immediate perception—physical or mental—attention should be directed to an element in "faith", "belief" of which we have as yet spoken little but which seems always present and indeed characteristic. This is the element of trust. There is an element of trust lying at the bottom of all our convictions, even those which we designate "knowledge", because, as we say, they are of the order of "theoretic certitude", or "rational assurance". "The original data of reason", says Sir William Hamilton truly, "do not rest on reason, but are necessarily accepted by reason on the authority of what is beyond itself." "These data", he adds, "are, therefore, in rigid propriety, *beliefs*, or *trusts*." The collocation of the terms here, "beliefs or trusts", should be observed; it betrays the propinquity of the two ideas. To

say that an element of trust underlies all our knowledge is therefore equivalent to saying that our knowledge rests on belief. The conceptions of believing and trusting go, then, together; and what we have now to suggest is that it is this open implication of "trust" in the conception of "belief", "faith" which rules the usage of these terms.

There is, we have said, an element of trust in all our convictions, and therefore "faith", "belief" may be employed of them all. And when convictions are distinguished from convictions, the convictions in which the element of trust is most prominent tend to draw to themselves the designations of "faith", "belief". It is not purely arbitrary, therefore, that those convictions which rest on our rational perceptions are called "knowledge" while those which rest on "authority" or "testimony" receive the name of "belief", "faith". It is because the element of trust is, not indeed more really, but more prominently, present in the latter than in the former. We perceive and feel the element of trust in according our mental assent to facts brought to us by the testimony of others and accepted as facts on their authority as we do not in the findings of our own rational understandings. And therefore we designate the former matters of faith, belief, and the latter matters of knowledge. Knowing, we then say, is seeing; believing is crediting. And that is only another way of saying that "knowledge" is the appropriate designation of those convictions which rest on our own mental perceptions, while "faith", "belief" is the appropriate designation of those convictions which rest on testimony or authority. While we may use either term broadly for all convictions, we naturally employ them with this discrimination when they are brought in contrast with one another.

It appears, therefore, not only that we are here in the presence of two classes of convictions—the difference between which is real—but that when these two classes are designated respectively by the terms "knowledge" and "faith", "belief" they are appropriately designated. These

designations suggest the real difference which exists between the two classes of convictions. Matters of faith, matters of belief are different from matters of knowledge—not as convictions less clear, firm or well-grounded, not as convictions resting on grounds less objectively valid, not as convictions determined rather by desire, will, than by evidence—but as convictions resting on grounds less direct and immediate to the soul, and therefore involving a more prominent element of trust, in a word as convictions grounded in authority, testimony as distinguished from convictions grounded in rational proof. The two classes of convictions are psychologically just convictions; they are alike, in Dr. Baldwin's phrase, "forced consents"; they rest equally on evidence and are equally the product of evidence; they may be equally clear, firm and assured; but they rest on differing kinds of evidence and differ, therefore, in accordance with this difference of kind in the evidence on which they rest. In "knowledge" as the mental response to rational considerations, the movement of the intellect is prominent to the obscuration of all else. Of course the whole man is active in "knowledge" too—for it is the man in his complex presentation who is the subject of the knowledge. But it is "reason" which is prominent in the activity which assures itself of reality on grounds of mental perception. In "faith", on the other hand, as the mental response to testimony, authority, the movement of the sensibility in the form of trust is what is thrust forward to observation. Of course, every other faculty is involved in the act of belief—and particularly the intellectual faculties to which the act of "crediting" belongs; but what attracts the attention of the subject is the prominence in this act of crediting, of the element of trust which has retired into the background in those other acts of assent which we know as "knowledge". Faith then emerges as the appropriate name of those acts of mental consent in which the element of trust is prominent. Knowledge is seeing; faith, belief, is trusting.

In what we call religious faith this prominent implication

of trust reaches its height. Religious belief may differ from other belief only in the nature of its objects; religious beliefs are beliefs which have religious conceptions as their contents. But the complex of emotions which accompany acts of assent to propositions of religious content, and form the concrete state of mind of the believer, is of course indefinitely different from that which accompanies any other act of believing. What is prominent in this state of mind is precisely trust. Trust is the active expression of that sense of dependence in which religion largely consists, and it is its presence in these acts of faith, belief, which communicates to them their religious quality and raises them from mere beliefs of propositions the contents of which happen to be of religious purport, to acts possessed of religious character. It is the nature of trust to seek a personal object on which to repose, and it is only natural, therefore, that what we call religious faith does not reach its height in assent to propositions of whatever religious content and however well fitted to call out religious trust, but comes to its rights only when it rests with adoring trust on a person. The extension of the terms, "faith", "belief" to express an attitude of mind towards a person, does not wait, of course, on their religious application. We speak familiarly of believing in, or having faith in, persons in common life; and we perceive at once that our justification in doing so rests on the strong implication of trust resident in the terms. It has been suggested not without justice, that the terms show everywhere a tendency to gravitate towards such an application.¹⁸ This element at all events becomes so prominent in the culminating act of religious faith when it rests on the

¹⁸"It is the nature and tendency of the word," says Bishop Moule, "to go out towards a person . . . When we speak of having faith we habitually direct the notion either towards a veritable person, or towards something which we personify in the mind . . . I do not attempt to explain the fact, as fact I think it is. Perhaps we may trace in it a far-off echo of that primeval Sanskrit word whose meaning is 'to bind'" . . . (*Faith: its Nature and its Work*, 1909, p. 10).

person of God our benefactor, or of Christ our Saviour, as to absorb the prior implication of crediting almost altogether. Faith in God, and above all, faith in Jesus Christ is just trust in Him in its purity. Thus in its higher applications the element of trust which is present in faith in all its applications, grows more and more prominent until it finishes by becoming well-nigh the entire connotation of the term; and "to believe in" "to have faith in" comes to mean simply "entrust yourself to". When "faith" can come thus to mean just "trust" we cannot wonder that it is the implication of "trust" in the term which rules its usage and determines its applications throughout the whole course of its development.

The justification of the application of the terms "believing", "faith" to these high religious acts of entrusting oneself to a person does not rest, however, entirely upon the circumstance that the element of trust which in these acts absorbs attention is present in all other acts of faith and only here comes into full prominence. It rests also on the circumstance that all the other constituent elements of acts of faith, belief, in the general connotation of these terms, are present in these acts of religious faith. The more general acts of faith, belief and the culminating acts of religious belief, faith, that is, differ from one another only in the relative prominence in each of elements common to both. For example, religious faith at its height—the act by which we turn trustingly to a Being conceived as our Righteous Governor, in whose hands is our destiny, or to a Being conceived as our Divine Saviour, through whom we may be restored from our sin, and entrust ourselves to Him—is as little a matter of "the will" and as truly a "forced" consent as is any other act called faith, belief. The engagement of the whole man in the act—involving the response of all the elements of his nature—is no doubt more observable in these highest acts of faith than in the lower, as it is altogether natural it should be from the mere fact that they are the highest exercises of faith. But the determination of the

response by the appropriate evidence—its dependence on evidence as its ground—is no less stringent or plain. Whenever we obtain a clear conception of the rise in the human soul of religious faith as exercised thus at its apex as saving trust in Christ we perceive with perfect plainness that it rests on evidence as its ground.

It is not unusual for writers who wish to represent religious faith in the form of saving trust in Christ as an act of the will to present the case in the form of a strict alternative. This faith, they say, is an exercise not of the intellect but of the heart. And then they proceed to develop an argument, aiming at a *reductio ad absurdum* of the notion that saving faith can possibly be conceived as a mere assent of the intellect. A simple assent of the mind, we are told, "always depends on the nature and amount of proof" presented, and is in a true sense "involuntary". When a proposition is presented and sufficiently supported by proof "a mind in a situation to apprehend the proof believes inevitably". "If the proposition or doctrine is not supported by proof, or if the mind is incapable from any cause, of appreciating the proof, unbelief or doubt is equally certain." "Such a theory of faith would, therefore, suspend our belief or unbelief, and consequently our salvation or damnation, upon the manner in which truth is presented to our minds, or our intellectual capability of its appreciation." "To express the whole matter briefly", concludes the writer whose argument we have been following, "it excludes the whole matter of the will, and makes faith or unbelief a matter of necessity."¹⁹

It is not necessary to pause to examine this argument in detail. What it is at the moment important to point out is that the fullest agreement that saving faith is a matter not of the intellect but of the heart, that it is "confidence" rather than "conviction", does not exclude the element of intelligent assent from it altogether, or escape the necessity of recognizing that it rests upon evidence. Is

¹⁹ Dr Richard Beard, *Lectures*, vol. II. pp. 362-363.

the "confidence" which faith in this its highest exercise has become, an ungrounded confidence? A blind and capricious act of the soul's due to a purely arbitrary determination of the will? Must it not rest on a perceived—that is to say a well-grounded—trustworthiness in the object on which it reposes? In a word, it is clear enough that a conviction lies beneath this confidence, a conviction of the trustworthiness of the object; and that this conviction is produced like other convictions, just by evidence. Is it not still true, then, that the confidence in which saving faith consists is inevitable if the proof of the trustworthiness of the object on which it reposes is sufficient—or as we truly phrase it "compelling"—and the mind is in a situation to appreciate this proof; and doubt is inevitable if the proof is insufficient or the mind is incapable from any cause of appreciating the proof? Is not the confidence which is the faith of the heart, therefore, in any case, as truly as the conviction which is the faith of the intellect, suspended "upon the manner in which truth is presented", or "our capability of its appreciation"? In a word, is it not clear that the assent of the intelligence is an inamissible element of faith even in its highest exercises, and it never comes to be an arbitrary "matter of choice", in which I may do "as I choose"?²⁰ For the exercise of this faith must there not then always be present to the mind, (1) the object on which it is to repose in confidence; (2) adequate grounds for the exercise of this confidence in the object? And must not the mind be in a situation to appreciate these grounds? Here, too, faith is, in Dr. Baldwin's phrase, a "forced consent", and is the product of evidence.

The impulse of the writer whose views we have just been considering to make "saving faith" a so-called "act of free volition" is derived from the notion that only thus can man be responsible for his faith. It is a sufficiently odd notion, however, that if our faith be determined by reasons and these reasons are good, we are not responsible for it,

²⁰ Dr. Beard, p. 364.

because forsooth, we then "believe inevitably" and our faith is "a matter of necessity". Are we to hold that responsibility attaches to faith only when it does not rest on good reasons, or in other words is ungrounded, or insufficiently grounded, and is therefore arbitrary? In point of fact, we are responsible for our volitions only because our volitions are never arbitrary acts of a faculty within us called "will", but the determined acts of our whole selves, and therefore represent us. And we are responsible for our faith in precisely the same way because it is *our* faith, and represents us. For it is to be borne in mind that faith, though resting on evidence and thus in a true sense, as Prof. Baldwin calls it, a "forced consent", is not in such a sense the result of evidence that the mind is passive in believing—that the evidence when adequate objectively is always adequate subjectively, or *vice versa*, quite independently of the state of the mind that believes. Faith is an act of the mind, and can come into being only by an act of the mind, expressive of its own state. There are two factors in the production of faith. On the one hand, there is the evidence on the ground of which the faith is yielded. On the other hand, there is the subjective condition by virtue of which the evidence can take effect in the appropriate act of faith. There can be no belief, faith, without evidence; it is on evidence that the mental exercise which we call belief, faith, rests; and this exercise or state of mind cannot exist apart from its ground in evidence. But evidence cannot produce belief, faith, except in a mind open to this evidence, and capable of receiving, weighing and responding to it. A mathematical demonstration is demonstrative proof of the proposition demonstrated. But even such a demonstration cannot produce conviction in a mind incapable of following the demonstration. Where musical taste is lacking, no evidence which derives its force from considerations of melody can work conviction. No conviction, whether of the order of what we call knowledge or of faith, can be produced by considerations to which the mind to be convinced is inhale.

Something more, then, is needed to produce belief, faith, besides the evidence which constitutes its ground. The evidence may be objectively sufficient, adequate, overwhelming. The subjective effect of belief, faith is not produced unless this evidence is also adapted to the mind, and to the present state of that mind, which is to be convinced. The mind, itself, therefore,—and the varying states of the mind—have their parts to play in the production of belief, faith; and the effect which is so designated is not the mechanical result of the adduction of the evidence. No faith without evidence; but not, no evidence without faith. There may stand in the way of the proper and objectively inevitable effect of the evidence, the subjective nature or condition to which the evidence is addressed. This is the ground of responsibility for belief, faith; it is not merely a question of evidence but of subjectivity; and subjectivity is the other name for personality. Our action under evidence is the touchstone by which is determined what we are. If evidence which is objectively adequate is not subjectively adequate the fault is in us. If we are not accessible to musical evidence, then we are by nature unmusical, or in a present state of unmusicalness. If we are not accessible to moral evidence, then we are either unmoral, or, being moral beings, immoral. The evidence to which we are accessible is irresistible if adequate, and irresistibly produces belief, faith. And no belief, faith can arise except on the ground of evidence duly apprehended, appreciated, weighed. We may cherish opinions without evidence, or with inadequate evidence; but not possess faith any more than knowledge. All convictions of whatever order, are the products of evidence in a mind accessible to the evidence appropriate to these particular convictions.

These things being so, it is easy to see that the sinful heart—which is enmity towards God—is incapable of that supreme act of trust in God—or rather of entrusting itself to God, its Saviour—which has absorbed into itself the term “faith” in its Christian connotation. And it is to avoid this

conclusion that many have been tempted to make faith not a rational act of conviction passing into confidence, resting on adequate grounds in testimony, but an arbitrary act of sheer will, produced no one knows how. This is not, however, the solution of the difficulty offered by the Christian revelation. The solution it offers is frankly to allow the impossibility of "faith" to the sinful heart and to attribute it, therefore, to the gift of God. Not, of course, as if this gift were communicated to man in some mechanical manner, which would ignore or do violence to his psychological constitution or to the psychological nature of the act of faith. The mode of the divine giving of faith is represented rather as involving the creation by God the Holy Spirit of a capacity for faith under the evidence submitted. It proceeds by the divine illumination of the understanding, softening of the heart and quickening of the will, so that the man so affected may freely and must inevitably perceive the force and yield to the compelling power of the evidence of the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ as Savior submitted to him in the Gospel. In one word the capacity for faith and the inevitable emergence in the heart of faith are attributed by the Christian revelation to that great act of God the Holy Spirit which has come in Christian theology to be called by the significant name of Regeneration. If sinful man as such is incapable of the act of faith, because he is inhabile to the evidence on which alone such an act of confident resting on God the Savior can repose, renewed man is equally incapable of not responding to this evidence, which is objectively compelling, by an act of sincere faith. In this its highest exercise faith thus, though in a true sense the gift of God, is in an equally true sense man's own act, and bears all the character of faith as it is exercised by unrenewed man in its lower manifestations.

It may conduce to a better apprehension of the essential nature of faith and its relation to the evidence in which it is grounded, if we endeavor to form some notion of the effect of this evidence on the minds of men in the three great

stages of their life on earth—as sinless in Paradise, as sinful, as regenerated by the Spirit of God into newness of life. Like every other creature, man is of course absolutely dependent on God. But unlike many other creatures, man, because in his very nature self-conscious, is conscious of his dependence on God; his relation of dependence on God is not merely a fact but a fact of his self-consciousness. This dependence is not confined to any one element of human nature but runs through the whole of man's nature; and as self-conscious being man is conscious of his absolute dependence on God, physically, psychically, morally, spiritually. It is this comprehensive consciousness of dependence on God for and in all the elements of his nature and life, which is the fundamental basis in humanity of faith, in its general religious sense. This faith is but the active aspect of the consciousness of dependence, which, therefore, is the passive aspect of faith. In this sense no man exists, or ever has existed or ever will exist who has not "faith". But this "faith" takes very different characters in man as unfallen and as fallen and as renewed.

In unfallen man, the consciousness of dependence on God is far from a bare recognition of a fact; it has a rich emotional result in the heart. This emotional product of course includes fear, in the sense of awe and reverence. But its peculiar quality is just active and loving trust. Sinless man delights to be dependent on God and trusts Him wholly. He perceives God as his creator, upholder, governor and bountiful benefactor, and finds his joy in living, moving and having his being in Him. All the currents of his life turn to Him for direction and control. In this spontaneous trust of sinless man we have faith at its purest.

Now when man fell, the relation in which he stood to God was fundamentally altered. Not as if he ceased to be dependent on God, in every sphere of his being and activity. Nor even as if he ceased to be conscious of this his comprehensive dependence on God. Even as sinner man cannot but believe in God; the very Devils believe and tremble. He cannot escape the knowledge that he is utterly de-

pendent on God for all that he is and does. But his consciousness of dependence on God no longer takes the form of glad and loving trust. Precisely what sin has done to him is to render this trust impossible. Sin has destroyed the natural relation between God and His creature in which the creature trusts God, and has instituted a new relation, which conditions all his immanent as well as transient activities Godward. The sinner is at enmity with God and can look to God only for punishment. He knows himself absolutely dependent on God, but in knowing this, he knows himself absolutely in the power of his enemy. A fearful looking forward to judgment conditions all his thought of God. Faith has accordingly been transformed into unfaith; trust into distrust. He expects evil and only evil from God. Knowing himself to be dependent on God he seeks to be as independent of Him as he can. As he thinks of God, misery and fear and hatred take the place of joy and trust and love. Instinctively and by his very nature the sinner, not being able to escape from his belief in God, yet cannot possibly have faith in God, that is trust Him, entrust himself to Him.

The reestablishment of *this* faith in the sinner must be the act not of the sinner himself but of God. This because the sinner has no power to render God gracious which is the objective root, or to look to God for favor which is the subjective root of faith in the fiducial sense. Before he can thus believe there must intervene the atoning work of Christ cancelling the guilt by which the sinner is kept under the wrath of God, and the recreative work of the Holy Spirit by which the sinner's heart is renewed in the love of God. There is not required a creation of something entirely new, but only a restoration of an old relation and a renewal therewith of an old disposition. Accordingly although faith in the renewed man bears a different character from faith in unfallen man, inasmuch as it is trust in God not merely for general goodness but for the specific blessing of salvation—that is to say it is soteriological—it yet remains essentially the same thing as in unfallen man.

It is in the one case as in the other just trust—that trust which belongs of nature to man as man in relation to his God. And, therefore, though in renewed man it is a gift of God's grace, it does not come to him as something alien to his nature. It is beyond the powers of his nature as sinful man; but it is something which belongs to human nature as such, which has been lost through sin and which can be restored only by the power of God. In this sense faith remains natural even in the renewed sinner, and the peculiar character which belongs to it as the act of a sinner, namely its soteriological reference, only conditions and does not essentially alter it. Because man is a sinner his faith terminates not immediately on God, but immediately on the mediator, and only through His mediation on God; and it is proximately trust in this mediator for salvation—relief from the guilt and corruption of sin,—and only mediately through this relief for other goods. But it makes its way through these intermediating elements to terminate ultimately on God Himself and to rest on Him for all goods. And thus it manifests its fundamental and universal character as trust in God, recognized by the renewed sinner, as by the unfallen creature, as the inexhaustible fountain to His creatures of all blessedness, in whom to live and move and have his being in the creature's highest felicity.

In accordance with the nature of this faith the Protestant theologians have generally explained that faith includes in itself the three elements of *Notitia*, *Assensus*, *Fiducia*. Their primary object has been, no doubt, to protest against the Romish conception which limits faith to the assent of the understanding. The stress of the Protestant definition lies therefore upon the fiducial element. This stress has not led Protestant theologians generally, however, to eliminate from the conception of faith the elements of understanding and assent. No doubt this has been done by some, and it is perhaps not rare even to-day to hear it asserted that faith is so purely trust that there is no element of assent in it at all. And no doubt theologians have differed among themselves as to whether all these elements are to be counted as included

in faith, or some of them treated rather as preliminary steps to faith or effects of faith. But speaking broadly Protestant theologians have reckoned all these elements as embraced within the mental movement we call faith itself; and they have obviously been right in so doing. Indeed, we may go farther and affirm that all three of these elements are always present in faith,—not only in that culminating form of faith which was in the mind of the theologians in question—saving faith in Christ—but in every movement of faith whatever, from the lowest to the highest instances of its exercise. No true faith has arisen unless there has been a perception of the object to be believed or believed in, an assent to its worthiness to be believed or believed in, and a commitment of ourselves to it as true and trustworthy. We cannot be said to believe or to trust in a thing or person of which we have no knowledge; “implicit faith” in this sense is an absurdity. Of course we cannot be said to believe or to trust the thing or person to whose worthiness of our belief or trust assent has not been obtained. And equally we cannot be said to believe that which we distrust too much to commit ourselves to it. In every movement of faith, therefore, from the lowest to the highest there is an intellectual, an emotional and a voluntary element, though naturally these elements vary in their relative prominence in the several movements of faith. This is only as much as to say that it is the man who believes, who is the subject of faith, and the man in the entirety of his being as man. The central movement in all faith is no doubt the element of assent; it is that which constitutes the mental movement so called a movement of conviction. But the movement of assent must depend, as it always does depend, on a movement, not specifically of the will, but of the intellect; the assensus issues from the notitia. The movement of the sensibilities which we call “trust”, is on the contrary the product of the assent. And it is in this movement of the sensibilities that faith fulfills itself, and it is by it that, as specifically “faith”, it is “formed”.

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